the portion of the inner peripheral wall between the first and second supporting protrusions is substantially linear.

Overall, claim 15 is similar to claim 1, but requires that each of the supporting protrusions have the recited characteristics, instead of "at least one" of the supporting protrusions, as recited in claim 1. In addition, claim 15 does not include the language originally deemed problematic by the Examiner. There is no discussion of parallel, parallel edges, etc.; rather, claim 15 recites that the thin-walled members extend in the longitudinal direction of the hollow cylindrical body. Accordingly, for reasons similar to those expressed with regard to claim 1, Applicant believes that claim 15 is in condition for allowance, and courteously solicits the Examiner's approval thereof.

Accordingly, the allowance of claims 1-16 and passage of the subject application to issue is courteously solicited. If the Applicant may be of any further assistance in the prosecution of this Application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at (248) 364-2100. Applicant has calculated no additional fee due in connection with this paper. The Commissioner is authorized to charge any deficiencies or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 04-1131.

Respectfully submitted,

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APPENDIX

Marked-Up Version of Specification Showing Changes:

Please Substitute the Following Paragraph for the first Paragraph of the Section Entitled: EMBODIMENT FOR CARRYING OUT THE INVENTION (page 10, line 4):

The mortar grouting type joint for reinforcing bars of the present invention (hereinafter referred to as the "joint") will be described with reference to the drawings. The joint 1 of the present invention consists of a hollow cylindrical body having an opening cover 2 at its end, a bolt hole 8 in its side wall, and supporting protrusion s 5 on its inner wall surface. A reinforcing bar 12 inserted through a circular hole 3 provided in the opening cover 2 is supported by and secured to the joint by means of a bolt 13 threaded through the bolt hole 8, the supporting protrusion s 5, and the edge of the circular hole 3 of the opening cover 2. In the joint of the present invention, the supporting protrusions 5 consist of a pair of thin-walled members extending in parallel in the longitudinal direction of the hollow cylindrical body. The portion of each thin-walled member supporting the reinforcing bar inserted through the opening cover 2 (reinforcing bar supporting portion) 6 constitutes the apex, the thin-walled member having a ridge line 7 sloping toward the opening cover 2 through which the reinforcing bar is inserted, and having contact points with the cylindrical body 20. Note that the ridge line may be a straight line or an appropriately curved line concave or convex with respect to the wall surface of the hollow cylindrical body.

Please Substitute the Following Paragraph for the Paragraph Beginning at Page 13, line 6, and ending page 14, line 14:

That is, when, in performing reinforcing bar connection, the joint is engaged with one reinforcing bar side (e.g., the reinforcing bar 12-a side (hereinafter referred to as side A), the reinforcing bar first comes into contact with the supporting protrusion s 5 (arranged on side A of the joint) sloping toward the side A opening cover 2 through which the reinforcing bar is first inserted, and is automatically guided toward the

reinforcing bar supporting portions 6 while sliding on the pair of thin-walled members constituting the supporting protrusion s 5, until it is arranged coaxially with the joint on the supporting protrusion 5 side of the joint. As the engagement further progresses, the above-described reinforcing bar comes into contact with the ridge line portion sloping on the opening cover 2 side of the supporting protrusion s 5 installed on the other side (side B which is opposite to side A) of the joint, and is automatically guided toward the reinforcing bar supporting portions 6 while sliding on the pair of thin-walled members constituting the supporting protrusion s 5, until it is arranged coaxially with the joint also on side B of the joint. Next, when the joint is engaged with the other reinforcing bar (12-b) substantially aligned therewith, this reinforcing bar also becomes coaxial with the joint on both side A and side B thereof. The pairs of thin-walled members associated with the respective reinforcing bars 12-a and 12-b are separated by a substantially linear wall section 22. Next, the joint is pulled back by its half length toward the first reinforcing bar, and the contact position between the two reinforcing bars is mated with the longitudinal central portion of the joint. By this single reciprocal movement of the joint, the two reinforcing bars can easily attain a coaxial relationship. Thereafter, the bolt 13 is threaded in to fasten the reinforcing bar to the joint, whereby it is possible to prevent the coaxial relationship from being disturbed by the coaxial adjustment operation of other reinforcing bar pairs. This effect can be achieved by the fact that the thin-walled members constituting the supporting protrusion s have an angle shape ridge line sloping on both sides of the joint.

Marked-Up Version of Claims Showing Changes:

1. (PREVIOUSLY AMENDED) A mortar grouting type joint for reinforcing bars, comprising a hollow cylindrical body having an opening cover (2) at an end, a bolt hole (8) on the side wall, and first and second supporting protrusions (5) on the inner peripheral wall, adapted to support reinforcing bars (12) with bolts (13) and the supporting protrusions (5), wherein:

the portion of the inner peripheral wall between the first and second supporting protrusions is substantially linear;

at least a first of the supporting protrusions (5) consists of a pair of thin-walled members extending in the longitudinal direction of the hollow cylindrical body, wherein the contact points of each of said thin-walled members with said peripheral wall define a line substantially parallel to a line defined by the contact points of the corresponding thin-walled member with said peripheral wall [and attached to said inner peripheral wall along substantially parallel edges]; and

said thin-walled members each have a ridge line (7) sloping toward the opening cover (2), with the portion of the thin-walled member supporting the reinforcing bar (12) inserted through the opening cover (2) constituting the apex.

15. (AMENDED) A mortar grouting type joint for reinforcing bars, comprising a hollow cylindrical body having an opening cover (2) at an end, a bolt hole (8) on the side wall, and supporting protrusions (5) on the inner peripheral wall, adapted to support reinforcing bars (12) with bolts (13) and the supporting protrusions (5), wherein:

each supporting protrusion (5) consists of a pair of thin-walled members extending in the longitudinal direction of the hollow cylindrical body; and

the portion of the inner peripheral wall between the first and second supporting protrusions is substantially linear;

said thin-walled members each have a ridge line (7) sloping toward the opening cover (2), with the portion of the thin-walled member supporting the reinforcing bar (12) inserted through the opening cover (2) constituting the apex; and

engagement of the thin-walled members with the reinforcing bars aligns the reinforcing bars in a substantially coaxial fashion.